

Child Care & Early Education RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

A partnership of the National Center for Children in Poverty, the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, the Child Care Bureau, and the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation

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Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems A Key Topic Resource List August 2007

Research Connections conducted a comprehensive search of its collection for resources focused on **early childhood comprehensive systems (ECCS)**. This Key Topic Resource List includes an overview of issues addressed in the literature on early childhood comprehensive systems, as well as a listing of selected resources on the topic.

From the many results, *Research Connections* selected a limited number of resources of various types- including reports and papers, fact sheets and briefs, summaries, and reviews. Selection criteria included policy relevance and relatively recent publication. Based on the search results, resources were grouped into the following three categories:

- Overview of and Recommendations for Building Early Childhood Systems
- State Examples, Results, and Findings
- Funding and Maximizing Resources for Early Childhood Systems

Within each category, resources are organized according to publisher type and publication date. *Research Connection's* one-sentence description is included for each resource on the following list. For complete citations, which include abstracts and full text for some resources, click on the titles.

Overview:

Early childhood comprehensive systems (ECCS) are collaborations implemented by states or localities, which aim to coordinate multiple early childhood services -including early care and education- to better promote child development by supporting families and communities. These comprehensive systems also seek to ensure that children are healthy and ready to learn at school entry by reducing disparities in access and quality of early care and improving services for those at highest risk. Efforts to form ECCS partnerships involve a range of public and private early childhood agencies, parents, and communities. The key components of these programs are: child health and the medical home; early care and education; mental health and social-emotional development; family support; and parenting education.*

States employ a variety of strategies to provide ECCS services to children and families, including expanding access to Early Head Start programs and utilizing Early Head Start Program Standards when developing new models, building networks of trained mental health consultants to work with parents and child care providers, and using direct program contracts to link families to needed services. For these partnerships to be effective, they must follow high program standards and approved early learning guidelines, hire qualified trainers and caregivers and offer adequate compensation, and provide linkages for families to a wide-array of services that promote child development. However, a variety of challenges interfere with the development of strong ECCS partnerships, such as poor coordination of services, inferior quality of services, and difficulty serving all of those in need – especially the youngest children and the neediest families.

Research on this topic discusses the essential components of ECCS programs, highlights new state and community initiatives, describes the many challenges facing state leaders with ECCS implementation, reviews a range of governance structures and funding strategies that enable maximization of resources, and presents creative ways to form successful ECCS partnerships. Studies also explore emerging questions and areas of concern such as:

- What do successful collaborative processes look like? What strategies have been effective in alleviating costs of care for low-income families?
- How have communities and states worked together to create viable funding streams?
- What barriers do families face in accessing high-quality services for their young children?
- What challenges do providers and service agencies face in serving their target population?

*Key Topic Resource Lists on each of these individual components are available at: www.researchconnections.org/keytopics

Overview of and Recommendations for Building Early Childhood Systems

Government

- **United States. Child Care Bureau. (2002). [Partnerships for quality: Improving infant-toddler child care for low-income families](#). Washington, DC: Zero to Three.**
[Full Report](#)
[Executive Summary](#)
A study of collaborations to increase access to high-quality child care for low-income families.

Journals

- **Jones, Michelle Ganow. (2003). [Coordinating with Head Start programs to support low-income working families](#). Welfare Information Network Issue Notes, 7(5).**
A brief on ways Head Start, in conjunction with other services and agencies, serves low-income working families.
- **McBride, Brent A.; Bae, Ji-Hi; & Blatchford, Kristina. (2003). [Family-school-community partnerships in rural PreK at-risk programs](#). Journal of Early Childhood Research, 1(1), 49-72.**
A study using focus groups to examine how parents, teachers, and administrators perceive the purpose of rural prekindergarten at-risk programs and to examine factors that they consider to act as possible barriers to effective family-school-community partnerships.
- **Brown, Elizabeth Glyn; Amwake, Carolynn; Speth, Tim; & Scott-Little, Catherine. (2002). [The continuity framework: A tool for building home, school, and community partnerships](#). Early Childhood Research & Practice, 4(2).**
A presentation of training materials developed to aid in the establishment of viable community partnerships and, in turn, to assist these collaboratives in the planning and monitoring of services for children.

Universities and Research Organizations

- **Columbia University. National Center for Children in Poverty. (2007). [State of the states' ECCS initiatives \(Project Thrive Short Take No. 5\)](#) New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty.**
A summary of a review of state early childhood comprehensive systems plans, report, and other documents related to early childhood systems.
- **National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care (U.S.). (2006). [Strengthening interdisciplinary partnerships in addressing children's early development: A think tank](#). Aurora, CO: National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care.**
Report of a symposium on creating and maintaining partnerships among relevant disciplines in the area of young children's socioemotional health and early socioemotional development.

- Bassok, Daphna; Stipek, Deborah J.; Inkelas, Moira; & Kuo, Alice A. (2005). [Building community systems for young children: Early childhood education](#). (Building State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Series No. 11). University of California, Los Angeles, National Center for Infant and Early Childhood Health Policy.
A discussion of the importance and funding sources of early child care and education, and the ways in which the State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (SECCS) improves early childhood outcomes.
- Bruner, Charles; Wright, Michelle S.; Gebhard, Barbara; & Hibbard, Susan. (2004). [Building an early learning system: The ABCs of planning and governance structure](#). Des Moines, IA: State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network
An overview of planning, governance, and management strategies that states can use to develop early learning systems.
- Child Trends & Center for Child Health Research. (2004). [Early child development in social context: A chartbook](#). New York: Commonwealth Fund.
A summary of recently collected descriptive data regarding early child health and development developed for the use of health care professionals, early childhood education specialists, parents, and policy makers.
- Gilliam, Jr., Franklin D.; & Bales, Susan N. (2004). [Framing early childhood development: Strategic communications and public preferences](#). (Building State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Series No. 7). Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, National Center for Infant and Early Childhood Health Policy.
An examination of approaches to conveying organizational information and the role of communications methods in early childhood program planning, implementation and management.
- Halfon, Neal; Uyeda, Kimberly; Inkelas, Moira; & Rice, Thomas. (2004). [Building bridges: A comprehensive system for healthy development and school readiness](#). (Building State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Series No. 1). University of California, Los Angeles, National Center for Infant and Early Childhood Health Policy.
A presentation of a set of principles that states can use to advance their planning process, reach out to new partners, develop collaborative strategies, and build a foundation for the implementation phase of the State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (SECCS) initiative.
- Irish, Kate; Schumacher, Rachel; & Lombardi, Joan. (2004). [Head Start comprehensive services: A key support for early learning for poor children](#). (Head Start Series Brief No. 4). Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.
A brief on the comprehensive services available through Head Start and Early Head Start programs and rates of usage by Head Start families, based on the 2001-2002 Program Information Reports (PIR).
- Schilder, Diane, (2004). [Head Start/child care partnerships: Partnering programs more likely to provide comprehensive services](#). (Research Brief Vol. 2 No. 1). Newton, MA: Education Development Center, Center for Children and Families.
A brief describing and comparing the screenings, referrals, and services offered by child care centers in partnerships with Head Start and those not in partnerships in Ohio.

Other

- National Governors' Association. (2005). [Building the foundation for bright futures: Final report of the NGA task force on school readiness](#). Washington, DC: National Governors' Association.
A discussion of the actions that governors and states can take to support families, schools, and communities in their efforts to ensure that all children start school ready to reach their full potential.

State Examples, Results, and Findings

Government

- **Delaware. Division of Public Health. Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative. (2005). [Building a comprehensive early childhood system in Delaware: Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems \(ECCS\) Grant needs assessment](#). Dover: Delaware Division of Public Health, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative.**
An evaluation of the current strengths and needs of Delaware's early childhood system, both within the state Division of Public Health and among programs outside of government serving young children and their families, based in part on surveys of family experiences of early childhood services and recommendations for system improvements.
- **Delaware. Division of Public Health. Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative. [n.d.]. [Findings and recommendations: Delaware Early Childhood Focus Group Study](#). Dover: Delaware Division of Public Health, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative.**
A presentation of results from focus groups conducted to obtain information to inform report on status and execution of State's plan to strengthen its early childhood services system.

University and Research Organizations

- **Children's Defense Fund (U.S.). (2005). [North Carolina early childhood development facts](#). Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund.**
A statistical fact sheet on North Carolina's preschool children and early childhood education system, including the More at Four program serving at risk children, and the Smart Start initiative designed to support community planning for comprehensive services.
- **Children's Defense Fund (U.S.). (2005). [New York early childhood development facts](#). Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund.**
A statistical fact sheet on New York's preschool children and early childhood education system, including the Experimental Pre-Kindergarten program that emphasizes comprehensive services for children from low income families.
- **Heath, Jennifer M. (2005). [Creating a statewide system of multi-disciplinary consultation for early care and education in Connecticut](#). Farmington: Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut.**
A study of the feasibility of implementing a system of providing professional guidance or services, in areas such as health, safety, administration, clinical practice and education, on-site at child care programs in order to improve overall program quality or address the individual needs of participating children and families.
- **Duran, Frances & Wilson, Susan B. (2004). [Keeping children on the path to school success: How is Connecticut doing?: A report on the state of the young child](#). Farmington, CT: Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut.**
An analysis of statewide and local data on child health and development, measuring the effectiveness of state services on the school readiness and success of children from birth to age 6 in Connecticut.
- **Floyd, Sheri L., (2004). [Up and running: A compendium of multi-state early childhood initiatives](#). Des Moines, IA: State Early Childhood Policy Technical Assistance Network.**
A compilation of multi-site initiatives focusing on school readiness, early care and education, child health, and family well being.
- **Case Western Reserve University. Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change, (2003). [Taking the initiative to scale: An evaluation of the Early Childhood Initiative](#). Briefly Stated, 3(2).**
A summary of findings from a program evaluation of Cuyahoga County's Early Childhood Initiative, a comprehensive, multi-agency approach toward meeting the needs of children from birth to age six.
- **Child Trends, (2003). [First steps and further steps: Early outcomes and lessons learned from South Carolina's school readiness initiative: 1999-2002 program evaluation report](#). Columbia: South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness.**
A description and assessment of the fiscal and programmatic activities over the first three years of a comprehensive state initiative, First Steps, aimed at improving early childhood development, with an evaluation of the program's progress toward developing collaborative methods to coordinate services for young children and families as mandated by enabling legislation.

Other

- **Maryland Early Care and Education Committee, (2006).** [Maryland's early care and education committee progress report](#). Baltimore: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
A progress report to an action plan for implementing strategies to improve the school readiness of children in Baltimore.

Funding and Maximizing Resources for Early Childhood Systems

University and Research Organizations

- **Johnson, Kay & Knitzer, Jane. (2006).** [Early childhood comprehensive systems that spend smarter: Maximizing resources to serve vulnerable children](#). (Project THRIVE Issue Brief No. 1). New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty.
[Funding Guide](#)
[Executive Summary](#)
A discussion of fiscal strategies to promote the emotional health of families and young children, highlighting opportunities for policymakers and describing effective social programs.
- **Johnson, Kay & Knitzer, Jane. (2005).** [Spending smarter: A funding guide for policymakers and advocates to promote social and emotional health and school readiness](#). New York: Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty.
A discussion of fiscal strategies to promote the emotional health of families and young children, highlighting opportunities for policymakers and describing effective social programs.
- **Hayes, Cheryl D.; Flynn, Margaret; & Stebbins, Helene. (2004).** [Strategic financing: Making the most of the State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative](#). (Building State Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Series No. 5). Los Angeles: University of California, Los Angeles, National Center for Infant and Early Childhood Health Policy.
[Report Brief](#)
An overview of financing strategies to foster the process of establishing effective statewide comprehensive systems of early childhood care, education and support services.
- **Flynn, Margaret & Hayes, Cheryl D. (2003).** [Blending and braiding funds to support early care and education initiatives](#). Washington, DC: Finance Project.
An overview of financing strategies through which earmarked funds from discrete sources are coordinated and integrated to foster the efforts of policymakers, program administrators and other stakeholders to efficiently develop productive, comprehensive systems of early childhood care, education and support services.
- **Cannon, Jill S.; Karoly, Lynn A.; & Kilburn, M. Rebecca. (2001).** [Directions for cost and outcome analysis of Starting Early Starting Smart: Summary of a cost expert meeting](#). Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation.
A document reporting on a meeting convened by RAND on behalf of the Casey Family Programs (CFP) and the Office of Early Childhood, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), to discuss issues related to cost-benefit analysis of the Starting Early Starting Smart program.
- **Urban Education Network of Iowa. [n.d.]** [Iowa financing strategy for a comprehensive early childhood system: "A down payment approach"](#). Des Moines: Urban Education Network of Iowa.
A description of organizational planning, financing, resource management and advocacy strategies to support the implementation of an efficient system for providing effective early care and education services.

Other

- **Voices for America's Children, (2005).** [Investing in early childhood: Increasing funding for Smart Start programs](#). Washington, DC: Voices for America's Children.
A policy brief discussing the strategy used to increase the funding for North Carolina's Smart Start programs.

To suggest additions to this Key Topic Resource List, please email us at contact@researchconnections.org.

To view and sort the full search results from which these resources were selected, you may use the Recreate Complete Search function. The full results came from the search-- title: health care *exact phrase* or comprehensive systems *exact phrase* or title: comprehensive fund* *all of the words* or title: partnerships *exact phrase* or title: early childhood systems *exact phrase* or description: comprehensive *exact phrase*.

This selected Key Topic Resource List was developed by staff of Child Care & Early Education *Research Connections*. Special thanks to Meredith Willa.